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NATO AND SALT
(SECOND OF FOUR PART SERIES)

ANNCR:

WITH THE APPROACH OF THE NATO SUMMIT MEETING HERE IN WASHINGTON ON MAY 30TH, MEMBERS OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE ARE WATCHING WITH KEEN INTEREST THE PROGRESS OF THE SECOND ROUND OF THE U.S.-SOVIET STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS....TALKS WHICH WILL AFFECT NATO'S MILITARY PLANNING AND POLICIES. WITH A BACKGROUND REPORT HERE IS VOA'S JULIAN GORSKI:

VOICE:

THE FIRST ROUND OF SALT TALKS TOOK TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS TO COMPLETE. AFTER MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED SEEMINGLY FRUITLESS SESSIONS IN HELSINKI AND VIENNA, AGREEMENT CAME SUDDENLY AT A MOSCOW SUMMIT MEETING IN 1972 BETWEEN FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON AND SOVIET LEADER BREZHNEV.

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TREATY RESTRICTED THE DEPLOYMENT OF DEFENSIVE MISSILE INSTALLATIONS, WHICH, IN EFFECT, MAKES IT MORE RISKY FOR A WOULD-BE AGGRESSOR TO UNLEASH NUCLEAR WAR. ALONG WITH AN INTERIM AGREEMENT LIMITING STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS, SALT-1 PAVED THE WAY FOR THE CURRENT SALT-2 TALKS AIMED AT RESTRICTING THE ACTUAL MEANS OF AGGRESSION.

THE SALT-1 ACCORD ALSO MARKED A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE MEANS OF VERIFICATION. IT ACKNOWLEDGED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE RIGHT WITHOUT INTERFERENCE OF EACH NATION TO USE ITS RECONNAISSANCE SATELLITES TO GUARD AGAINST TREATY VIOLATIONS.

THE INTERIM AGREEMENT, WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE SALT-1 TREATY, WAS DESIGNED TO FREEZE STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE MISSILES AT EXISTING

LEVELS. AT THE TIME IT WAS SIGNED, THE UNITED STATES HAD 1,054 OPERATIONAL, LAND-BASED INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES -- THE ICBM'S. THE SOVIET UNION HAD AN ESTIMATED 1,618 ICBMS. WESTERN OBSERVERS NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT NUMERICAL COMPARISONS CAN BE DECEPTIVE AND THAT THE SIZE OF EACH COUNTRY'S TERRITORY AND TERRAIN DIFFERENCES MUST ALSO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, ALONG WITH THE VARIED DESIGNS OF THE WEAPONS IN THE ARSENALS OF THE TWO SUPER-POWERS. SOVIET BALLISTIC MISSILES ARE KNOWN TO BE CONSIDERABLY HEAVIER AND TO CARRY MORE DEVASTATING POWER THAN THOSE OF AMERICAN MISSILES. BUT AMERICAN MISSILES EXCEL IN ACCURACY.

THE SALT-1 AGREEMENT WAS TO REMAIN IN FORCE FOR FIVE YEARS. BUT SHORTLY BEFORE ITS EXPIRATION DATE LAST YEAR, WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW AGREED TO CONTINUE TO ABIDE BY ITS PROVISIONS UNTIL THE MORE COMPEHENSIVE SALT-2 ACCORD IS REACHED. A SECOND SALT TREATY WAS GIVEN MOMENTUM BY THE 1974 VLADIVOSTOK MEETING BETWEEN THEN-PRESIDENT FORD AND MR. BREZHNEV. THE TWO LEADERS TENTATIVELY AGREED ON THE NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS THAT WOULD BE PLACED ON ALL OFFENSIVE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND DELIVERY VEHICLES. THEIR PROPOSALS ARE NOW EMBODIED IN A DRAFT TREATY WORKED OUT IN GENEVA. DETAILS OF THE TREATY WERE SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE IN A REPORT COMPILED BY U.S. CHIEF DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATORS PAUL WARNKE. THE WARNKE REPORT CONTAINS THE BASIC PROVISIONS OF THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT PLUS SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATIONS. THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION WOULD EACH BE ALLOWED BETWEEN 2,160 AND 2,250 STRATEGIC MILLILES AND BOMBER AIRCRAFT. THAT'S CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN AGREED UPON IN VLADIVOSTOK. FURTHERMORE, EACH SIDE WOULD BE LIMITED TO 1,200 TO 1,250 MISSILES WITH MULTIPLE WARHEADS (MIRV'S). BY GOING TO THE FULL LIMIT OF STRATEGIC BOMBERS, THE UNITED STATES AND

THE SOVIET UNION WOULD ALSO HAVE TO RESTRICT THEIR AIRCRAFT ARMED WITH CRUISE MISSILES -- A COMPUTER-GUIDED WEAPONS SYSTEM WHICH CAN BE LAUNCHED FROM AN AIRPLANE OR FIRED FROM A SUBMARINE TORPEDO TUBE. THE NUMBER OF CRUISE MISSILES WOULD BE LIMITED TO BETWEEN 70 AND 120. AND FINALLY THERE WOULD BE A LIMIT OF 820 SET ON LAND-BASED MISSILES WITH MULTIPLE WARHEADS.

THE WARNKE REPORT SAYS BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO BAN ALL MOBILE, LAND-BASED INTERCONTINENTAL MISSILES. THE BAN ON BOTH DEPLOYMENT AND TESTING OF THESE WEAPONS WOULD REMAIN IN FORCE FOR THE LIFE OF A PROTOCOL ATTACHED TO THE MAIN TREATY. THE PROTOCOL WOULD EXPIRE IN 1980. THE TREATY ITSELF WOULD REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL 1985, BY WHICH TIME FURTHER EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO LESSEN DANGERS OF NUCLEAR WARFARE IN A SALT-3 TREATY.

THE WARNKE REPORT NOTES THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE RELIABLE MONITORING DEVICES -- MAINLY OBSERVATION SATELLITES -- AND THAT ALTHOUGH SOME UNDETECTED VIOLATIONS ARE ALWAYS POSSIBLE, THOSE OF A SIGNIFICANTLY SERIOUS NATURE WOULD BE DISCOVERED IN TIME TO MAKE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

(OPT) SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOHN SPARKMAN DECLINED TO PASS JUDGMENT ON THE MERITS OF THE PORPOSED ACCORD PENDING THE PRESENTATION OF ITS FINAL VERSION FOR SENATE RATIFICATION. BUT HE CONCEDED THAT -- AS HE PUT IT: "VERIFICATION CAN NEVER BE ABSOLUTE. RISKS MUST BE WEIGHED AGAINST BENEFITS."
(END OPT)

IN MOSCOW, THE RELEASE OF THE WARNKE REPORT COINCIDES WITH A SPEECH IN WHICH PRESIDENT BREZHNEV DENOUNCED THOSE IN THE UNITED STATES WHO, HE SAID, ARE TRYING TO RETARD THE TREATY. NONETHELESS, THE SOVIET LEADER NOTED THAT THE GENEVA TALKS HAVE MADE WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS "NOTABLE PROGRESS."